

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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P 221451Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2899

S E C R E T MOSCOW 6290

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, US, UR

SUBJECT: SALT NEGOTIATIONS

1. AT SPASO LUNCH TODAY ARBATOV TOLD ME HE WAS STILL HOPEFUL A SALT 11 AGREEMENT COULD BE CONCLUDED THIS YEAR. HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THOSE WHO SAID TALKS WERE STALEMATED; THERE WAS DEFINITE DESIRE ON PART OF SOVIETS TO REACH AGREEMENT, AND HE HOPED SAME WAS TRUE FOR U.S. IN ANY EVENT, HE SAID, IF WE THOUGHT AGREEMENT WAS DIFFICULT TO REACH THIS YEAR, HE COULD SAY WITH ASSURANCE IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT NEXT YEAR.

2. WHEN I NOTED SHORT TIME REMAINING BEFORE CONVENTIONS OF US POLITICAL PARTIES, ARBATOV SAID HE DID NOT FEEL TIME SCHEDULE SHOULD PRESENT INSUPERABLE PROBLEMS. MAIN ISSUES WERE ALREADY WELL-DEFINED AND COULD BE SETTLED QUICKLY THROUGH CHANNELS "EVEN MORE CONFIDENTIAL THAN THOSE BEING USED AT PRESENT". ARBATOV FELT AGREEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT BEFORE CONVENTION AND COULD BE ANNOUNCED DURING PERIOD AFTER CONVENTIONS AND BEFORE U.S. ELECTIONS.

3. ARBATOV THEN LAUNCHED INTO HIGHLY CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF CRUISE MISSILE PROBLEM, SAYING HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND STRATEGIC RATIONALE FOR SUCH A WEAPON. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH US EXPERTS MAY CONSIDER IT A CHEAP WEAPON, IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT SOVIETS

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INEVITABLY WILL DEVELOP IT IF WE DO, WHICH IN TURN

WILL LEAD TO DEMANDS FOR COSTLY ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSE,
ETC.

4. COMMENT: ARBATOV IS A VOCAL AND LONG-STANDING
CRITIC OF CRUISE MISSILES. HIS VIEWS ARE NOT
ENCOURAGING IN TERMS OF FINDING A COMPROMISE SOLUTION
OF THE CRUISE MISSILE PROBLEM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, SALT (ARMS CONTROL), ARMS CONTROL MEETINGS, NEGOTIATIONS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, MISSILES, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW06290
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840104-2036, N760003-0407
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760434/aaaabcls.tel
Line Count: 70
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 OCT 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SALT NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: PARM, US, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006